

## From 24x7 to 4 hours, CM's faltering pledge on water

What will the proposed drinking water department do, if Goa's water resources are insufficient to start with?

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** A lot of water may have flown down Goa's rivers in the past six years and the State may have received back-to-back years of surplus rain in 2023 and 2024, but myopic planning and rampant over development have ensured that the people of the State are consistently denied sufficient water supply to their homes.

Such has been the struggle that Chief Minister Pramod Sawant, who loftily claimed in 2019 that every home in Goa would get 24x7 water supply by 2025 has scaled it down to four hours a day in his Assembly speech on February 8 - and that too by 2026.

His 2019 claims came during his Budget speech, where he also spoke about new water treatment plants and JICA projects to augment the State's water supply.

Reacting to the CM's statement, environmentalist Rajendra Kerkar who had voiced his concern over water crisis, said, "We will not get water even for one year. The government

### BUDGET ASSEMBLY SPEECH, JULY 2019

My government will ensure that all the... projects will be completed before 2025, which will enable us to move forward and move ahead to achieve the water summit of 24x7 water supply to all in Goa with no discrimination to rural and urban areas



### ASSEMBLY SPEECH, FEBRUARY 2025

I admit that it is not possible to provide water 24x7, but the government has plans to ensure water supply for four hours a day to every household. Infrastructure development for this is underway and will be completed before 2026

"We will not get water even for one year. The government has no policy to protect catchment areas of rivers, streams and springs, despite this being highlighted in the water policy

- Rajendra Kerkar, green activist

has no policy to protect catchment areas of rivers, streams and springs, despite this being highlighted in the water policy. Most of the rivers are heavily silted because of deforestation and it is affecting the water holding capacity of rivers, streams and springs."

Kerkar further stated that there is no encouragement or incentive from the government to protect existing water reservoirs like Salaulim, Amthane and Anjunem, all of which were created through damming but are silted heavily today.

Ganjem-Usgao, who had knocked on the High Court's doors over irregular water supply in the village, rued that the government had failed to provide regular water to the residents till date.

He said, "The Chief Minister is now talking of

providing four hours of water per day. But we are reeling under water shortage even after the High Court directed the PWD junior engineer to visit the village, monitor the water supply and file a report. This was in May 2024 after which engineers of PWD and WRD conducted door-to-door survey in Ganjem-Usgao. They surveyed 40 houses and everywhere the residents complained about water shortage and how they are depending on borewells, streams and lakes for water."

### THIS GOVT CAN'T GET US MHADEI WATER: ACTIVISTS

More on Pg 2 >>

"How will we receive water when Opa water treatment has shortfall of 16.7 MLD? The government is talking about constructing 25 MLD water treatment plant at Ganjem but that is yet to see the light of day. We are frustrated," Naik said.

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### RISKING IT ALL



Passengers enter a train through an emergency window at Patna railway station amid the ongoing Maha Kumbh Mela festival of Prayagraj, on Friday

## Digambar Kamat discharged in illegal mining case

Team Herald

**PANJIM:** The Principal District and Sessions Court in Panjim has discharged former Chief Minister Digambar Kamat and 16 others, including miner Ravindra Prakash, in an illegal mining case where they were charged with granting condonation of delay - essentially, an extension - in renewing mining leases, which was said to have resulted in a substantial loss to the state exchequer.

The case stemmed from an investigation by the Special Investigating Team (SIT) of the Crime Branch, which filed a chargesheet in 2018 against Kamat and the others. The charges related to the alleged condonation of delays in renewing mining leases between 2007 and 2012, during Kamat's tenure as Chief Minister. The FIR was based on a complaint lodged by the Directorate of Mines and Geology.

According to the chargesheet, the illegal con-

donation of delays caused a loss of Rs 135 crore to the state's treasury. However, despite the court's ruling in favour of the accused, Kamat still faces another chargesheet in a similar case, which is currently being heard in court.

The cases were filed following the findings of the Justice M B Shah Commission, which alleged that illegal mining in Goa from 2007 to 2012 had resulted in a Rs 35,000 crore scam, with Kamat being named as a key figure.

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